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"On one night alone, 4 bodies were found in sacks under Kalianyur bridge..."
"The body of Giot, 18, was found on 4th May by the roadside; there were two bullet wounds in the head... the night before he was dragged away from a bar on the outskirts of Jakarta by five men, four of them armed with pistols."
Tempo (Jakarta), 21 May 1983.

"On 11th May at around 8.30 pm, the body of Joko Sulisno was found in Kebayoran Baru, Jakarta. He had been shot twice in the chest. An hour later the body of Baginda Siregar was found near the Blok M bus terminal. He had been shot in the head. The bodies of two other men, also with gunshot wounds, were found..."
Tempo, 21 May 1983

"In June, a jeep stopped regularly at night on a bridge over the Cimedang river, West Java. Local people always found a body in the river the next day, totalling 18 within a month, but were frightened to say anything to the police."
"A villager's duty is to farm," said one man. "These killings are the business of those in authority."
Tempo, 6 Aug 1983

The Indonesian Government describes the activities of army death squads as an operation against criminals. Most bodies are found marked with distinctive tattoos, which indicated they were members of youths gangs, known as gali-gali. Many people are trying desperately to remove tattoos which might incriminate them. Released prisoners have been committing petty crimes to be returned to the safety of jail, and those due for release have pleaded to be allowed to stay.

These killings have been going on for a year now in Indonesia. Little attention has been given to them by Western governments or media, with the exception of Holland, where the Government has been instructed to make formal representations about the killings to Indonesia. The Indonesian regime is being allowed to commit wholesale murder, with barely a whisper of protest in the countries whose own governments give it financial support. In May this year, the Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia (IGGI) will decide how much aid Jakarta will receive this year: this is an occasion when all those participating must be made aware of the full extent of the killings.

Write to your own parliamentary or governmental representative, let them know your opinion, so that the slaughter in Indonesia is stopped. We are all familiar with death squads and disappearances in Argentina and El Salvador. Who will speak up for the victims in Indonesia?

Issued by

tapol

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ARMY DEATH SQUADS IN ACTION IN INDONESIA

- Up to 4000 extra-judicial killings in 1983
- Human rights groups protest, but armed forces chief refuses to call a halt

General Benny Murdani, Commander-in-Chief of Indonesia's Armed Forces, has refused to take responsibility for thousands of deaths since April last year. Yet all the evidence shows they are the work of army death squads. His statement means the slaughter will continue throughout Indonesia.

General Benny Murdani

THE GO-AHEAD

"Don't ask me whether the Government can say when the killings will stop. If I were to say that the Government can stop them, that would mean acknowledging that the Government is committing the killing"

General Benny Murdani
5 January, 1984

"It is highly likely that the operation to combat criminality, which is still in force in Jogjakarta, will be extended to other cities in my command"

Lt. Gen. Yogie Memet, Territorial Commander of Java & Madura.
23 April 1983

"It is better to have a hundred dead criminals than a hundred thousand anxious citizens"

General Ali Said, Minister of Justice
June 1983

The Jogjakarta military began the killings. Security forces everywhere have continued the operation. The death squads are specially trained troops who dispose of their victims with ruthlessness. Athletic men 'of military bearing' drag people from the street or their houses, to be shot or strangled later. Most reports point to paracommandos from the elite KOPASSANDHA battalion, veterans of the war in East Timor, as the main perpetrators.

THE HISTORY

The killing of up to 4000 people, by well organised death squads in Indonesia, is yet another act of brutality by a regime with an 18 year history of appalling human rights abuses.

Security forces no longer openly admit, as they did at first in Jogja, that they carry out the killings, but the Government has expressed its support for the death squad operations, thus acknowledging that it has dispensed with the rule of law.

A climate of fear exists now in Indonesia. In 1983, three lawyers in East Java, seven people including a well known musician in Bandung, and a journalist in Central Java were reported *missing*, the first political victims of the killings.

May 1982	A foretaste of the 1983 operations: police in East Java conduct campaign against village gangs and Muslim leaders, killing at least 200.
April 1983	Military garrison in Jogjakarta announces operation to 'combat criminality'; killings begin. Lt. Gen. Memet says operation will be spread to rest of Java
May 1983	Death squads active in Jakarta. 48 bodies reported Jan-May, 21 in May alone. Now security forces will not admit responsibility, and newspapers may only refer to 'mystery killers'.
June-July 1983	Total of 55 victims of death squads in Jakarta, 60 in Jogja, 300+ in Java. Murdani admits total is much higher because many bodies are not reported.
August 1983	Government bans all media coverage of killings. 96 deaths reported from Semarang, 89 in West Java, 8 in Pontianak.
Sept-Nov 1983	Death squads intensify operations. Up to 3000 killed in the year, according to Mulya Lubis of the Legal Aid Institute. Report is received of 40 executed by Army firing squad in village of Rengas-Dengklok in West Java
Dec 1983	Asian Regional Council for Human Rights estimates 3000 extra-judicial killings in S.E Asia. Indonesia, with 2000 killings, is by far the worst. Nasution estimates total in Indonesia is double this.
Feb 1984	Figures collected by Indonesian journalist total 8,500 killings in E. Java alone (**Frij Nederland**, 11.2.84).

THE RESPONSE

Buyung Nasution,
Chairman of Legal Aid Institute

"These killings are the beginning of a series of arbitrary actions by the authorities, who think they can do whatever they like... They want to show that they have the right, the complete right, to take people's lives if these people are regarded as a threat, or as something that undermines their authority."

Buyung Nasution, 4 June 1983

Contradicting army claims that people have been killed while trying to escape, forensic expert Dr Abdul Mun'in said "the bodies have generally been shot at close range... sometimes the pistol has been fired right close to the skin. Many bodies have several gunshot wounds, which means the killer wanted to make sure his victim was dead."

A report by the *International Commission of Jurists* stated:
"Whatever the failure of law enforcing agencies to contain the rising crime rate, nothing can justify the summary execution of suspected criminals. Fears are already being expressed in Indonesia that similar methods could in future be resorted to for eliminating political opponents." August 1983

"Everyone I know in Jogjakarta, whether Indonesian or foreign, has either seen one of these killings or heard a first-hand account. For weeks this has been the hottest topic of conversation in town. There is no secret. People are being murdered by the hundred, and yet for some reason no-one seems to have written an accurate account in the international press,"

Letter to *International Herald Tribune*,
18 June 1983